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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000587

SIPDIS
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2019
TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL ASEC GV
SUBJECT: CNDD ORDERS STADIUM CLOSED TO PREVENT OPPOSITION PROTEST

Classified By: POLOFF J. TULLY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (U) On September 23, Minister of Youth Isto Keira announced that the country's largest National Stadium would be closed until October 5 for all cultural and political events prior to the Guinea-Burkina Faso soccer match scheduled for October 11. Claiming that some nefarious Guineans, paid by the opposing team, might plant fetishes in the stadium to throw the game, Keira sternly declared the facility closed. The closure conveniently prevents use of the stadium by the Forces Vives for a planned anti-Dadis demonstration on the 28th.

¶2. (U) Ridiculing the ruling, an Embassy LES claimed that the stadium had always been in use prior to other games, including a recent Guinea-Malawi match that Guinea lost. "Big concerts have always taken place there the night before soccer matches - no one worried about fetishes then."

COMMENT

¶3. (C) Closure of the stadium is unlikely to prevent the Force Vives from gathering. The move to close the stadium, which many see as a blatant attempt to silence the opposition, may increase political tensions. One Forces Vives member indignantly claimed to an Embassy officer that "We will march and then force our way into the stadium." A prominent youth leader stated that they were also considering a smaller stadium in another Conakry neighborhood close to where many Forces Vives members live. Several dates are being bandied about as possibilities for anti-CNDD demonstrations, the 28th being the most commonly heard. However, if potential demonstrators fear a security crackdown, they may alter their tactics.

BROKENSHIRE